

Message Text

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17

ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8633

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIS, RO

SUBJECT: ROMANIAN TRAWLER INAU

REF: STATE 088893

1. VERY MUCH APPRECIATED RECEIVING DETAILED SUMMARY OF ARMITAGE-IONITA CONVERSATION. TRAWLER SUBJECT HAD NOT BEEN RAISED WITH US FOR SOME TIME UNTIL EVENING MAY 2 WHEN IT WAS HIT SIMULTANEOUSLY BY BOTH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER GLIGA AND BANK OF FOREIGN TRADE PRESIDENT VOLOSENIUC. GLIGA, WHO HAD JUST RETURNED FROM ATTENDING FUNERAL OF AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT JONAS, SAID HE WAS DISTURBED TO FIND FROM IONITA REPORT OF CONVERSATION WITH ARMITAGE THAT QUESTION STILL NOT SETTLED DESPITE "THE FACT THAT ALL EXPERTS AGREED WITH ROMANIAN VERSION OF INCIDENT." VOLOSENIUC, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR FINDING MONEY TO PAY FOR CONTINUING EXPENSES AND EVENTUAL SETTLEMENT, ARGUED THAT US GOVERNMENT WAS TURNING MATTER INTO POLITICAL QUESTION BY REFUSING TO LET IT BE SETTLED ON REASONABLE BASIS. I IN TURN ARGUED THAT OUR EXPERTS STILL HAVE OPINIONS WHICH DIFFERED SUBSTANTIALLY FROM THOSE EXPERTS CITED BY GLIGA AND TOLD VOLOSENIUC THAT THE CASE WAS BEING TREATED IN NO RPT NO SENSE AS A POLITICAL ONE. DIS-
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CUSSION CONTINUED FOR SOME TIME WITH NO PARTICULAR

EDIFICATION ON EITHER SIDE BUT I REMAINED WITH CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT REPORTING FROM ROMANIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON HAS NOT GOTTEN ACROSS TO BUCHAREST THE SOLIDITY OF US ATTORNEY'S CASE.

2. SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH BOTH GLIGA AND VOLOSENIUC, WHOM I HAVE KNOWN AS GENERALLY REASONABLE PEOPLE, WENT AFTER ME DOES GIVE ME SOME PAUSE HOWEVER. I HAVE NO GREAT DESIRE FOR US TO GET INTO THE ACT HERE. IN ADDITION I UNDERSTAND THE APPROACH TAKEN BY ARMITAGE IN DECLINING THE ROMANIAN REQUEST FOR THE DEPARTMENT TO BECOME SUBSTANTIALLY INVOLVED. WHAT I AM WONDERING IS WHETHER THERE IS ANY WAY THE DEPARTMENT, TOGETHER WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, CAN FACILITATE ANY BETTER UNDERSTANDING AT LEAST BY THE COUNSEL THE ROMANIANS HAVE HIRED OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE PROSECUTOR'S CASE. I MUST ADMIT AT THE SAME TIME THAT I AM PUZZLED BY GLIGA'S REFERENCE TO EXPERT TESTIMONY AS SUSTAINING THE ROMANIAN VERSION. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL FOR US TO KNOW OF WHAT THIS EXPERT TESTIMONY CONSISTS AND WHETHER THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT GIVES IT ANY WEIGHT WHATSOEVER. I'M ALSO SOMEWHAT CONCERNED THAT THE DAY IS BOUND TO COME WHEN WE WILL NEED FOREIGN MINISTRY HELP IN TRYING TO EXTRICATE, PROBABLY UNDER CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURE, SOME AMERICAN OR OTHER WHO'S GOTTEN INTO TROUBLE HERE AND WHERE WE MAY WELL BE TOLD THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY CANNOT GET INVOLVED JUST AS THE DEPARTMENT WAS NOT ABLE TO GET INVOLVED IN THE INAU CASE. I REALIZE THERE ARE FINE LINES HERE BUT I WANT ON THE ONE HAND TO BE REASSURED THAT THE PROSECUTOR'S CASE IS AS WATERTIGHT AS IT APPEARED EARLIER AND ON THE OTHER TO ASK THAT EVERY EFFORT BE MADE, WITHOUT INTERPOSING THE DEPARTMENT TOO MUCH, TO CONTINUE TO GET THE RIGHT MESSAGE ACROSS TO THE ROMANIAN SIDE.
BARNES

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